



Who we are: Basic Health International (BHI) was established as a nonprofit organization in 2005 with a **mission** to eradicate cervical cancer in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2009 we became a formally registered nonprofit in El Salvador. Our offices are located in New York City and San Salvador, El Salvador.

The problem: Throughout the developing world, Pap smear programs have been unaffordable and impractical because they require extensive infrastructure, clinical and laboratory expertise, patient follow-up, and wide coverage with multiple screens throughout a lifetime.

What we do: BHI works directly with the public and private sector to improve regional and national cervical cancer prevention programs through training, direct patient care, research and policy initiatives.

Medical Training: BHI trains medical professionals in the single-visit, or “see-and-treat” approach to cervical cancer prevention. We utilize screening methods that yield immediate results in order for patients with positive exams to receive same-day treatment with cryotherapy. To date, we have trained over 80 medical professionals in visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA) screening. VIA is a speculum exam in which the provider applies 3-5% acetic acid to the cervix, allowing for the visualization of precancerous lesions. Women with positive exams can be treatment immediately with cryotherapy. In 2010 we trained 19 physicians, 8 nurses, and donated 9 cryotherapy units to the Salvadoran Ministry of Health.

Health Promoter Training: Health promoters are the link between women and their access to preventative healthcare. BHI conducts educational courses for Salvadoran health promoters in information about the human papillomavirus (HPV), cervical cancer, and patient recruitment methods. In 2010 we trained **150** health promoters.

Patient Care: Since 2006, BHI has screened over 6,000 women during our training courses, identified and treated over 100 biopsy-confirmed precancers and 11 cancers. We rent a small apartment in San Salvador near the National Cancer Institute, which provides cancer treatment to the public. We provide transportation, food and housing for all women we identify with cancer. In 2010 we provided treatment for 18 women who were suspicious for cancer and 4 women with invasive cervical cancer.

Policy Guidance: BHI collaborates with the Ministries of Health of Latin American countries at the local and national level. BHI has helped update national cervical cancer guidelines, written technical and policy manuals for providers, and serves as technical advisors to develop sustainable public health policies and programs. In 2010 BHI began working with the Salvadoran Ministry of Health to develop a plan to integrate HPV DNA-based screening methods into the cervical cancer prevention program.

Research: BHI conducts region-specific research with a focus on cervical cancer prevention and treatment methods. In 2010 we published eight papers, four abstracts and presented our research at five conferences.

Did you know?

Each year 275,000 women die due to cervical cancer

More than 80% of the estimated 500,000 new cases of cervical cancer each year occur in the developing world

Cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among women in El Salvador

Press contact:
Lauren Ditzian
(212) 241-0733
lditzian@basichealth.org
www.basichealth.org

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